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National Consumer Protection Week: Top 5 Scams

Scam # 2: Craigslist Scams

Las Vegas – Craigslist is an Internet marketplace for buyers and sellers, and it can be a great way to sell unneeded items or to find a job. But, this online resource is also fertile ground for scammers.

One of the most common scams on Craigslist is the overpayment con. It works like this: you are selling a television, and a buyer contacts you to buy it. However, the buyer is out of town and has to send you a check for the TV. When the check arrives, it's "accidentally" made out for more than the asking price. The buyer asks you to deposit the check anyway and wire back the difference along with shipping the TV. The check turns out to be bogus, and you're out whatever extra money you wired plus the TV.

Consumers also get ripped off by job scams on Craigslist. A typical con is the work-at-home scheme in which you're offered an incredible salary for a telecommuting job that requires little skills. There are two ways the scammers get you with this scenario. First, they ask for up-front "handling", "administrative" or "training" fees. Second, they ask for personal information on an application or for a "background check". You've lost the money you sent them, and then, months later, you may be a victim of identity theft.

To help you avoid being scammed, Craigslist offers good advice at <http://www.craigslist.org/about/scams>.

Here are some other tips to stay safe:

- Don't accept checks from someone you don't know. Stick with cash transactions.
 - Research any job opportunities online to see if complaints have been posted on the Better Business Bureau's message boards or on complaint websites.
 - Be wary of any job that promises high pay for low-skill work and doesn't require a job interview or face-to-face meeting with your potential boss.
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About National Consumer Protection Week

National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW) is a coordinated campaign that encourages consumers nationwide to take full advantage of their consumer rights and make better-informed decisions. For more information, visit <http://www.ncpw.gov/>.

About the Fight Fraud Taskforce and Website

The statewide Fight Fraud Taskforce includes members from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and other local law enforcement agencies, the I.R.S., the Department of Justice, the Nevada Attorney General and its Bureau of Consumer Protection, the Secretary of State, the Better Business Bureau in Las Vegas and Reno, the Department of Business & Industry, the Clark County Recorder, the P.U.C., the Division of Mortgage Lending, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Federal Trade Commission, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, and experts from the private sector among others. The group acts as a clearinghouse for fraud information and strives to educate the public on how to avoid the latest scams. Visit <http://fightfraud.nv.gov> for more information.

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